

My Story



History and Beauty

Thousand Steps Preserve

By George Conrad, Standing Stone Trail Club

“My parents took me there as a child. Now, later in life, I continue to bring my children, friends, and family on hikes there.”



While the Thousand Steps offer access to the beauty of Huntington County, they also serve as a reminder of a bygone era. Originally the Steps were meant to only provide an easier commute to the mountaintop quarry, but today they allow us to imagine the



Keystone Fund Investment: \$95,000

Total Public/Private Investment: \$194,000

sacrifices our forefathers made. Constructed in 1936 during the area’s boom in the brickmaking industry, the steps were used by employees of Harbison-Walker to access ganister and bring the rock down the switchbacks to the refractories where it would be turned into fire bricks used to line steel-making furnaces. After World War II, the need for steel fabrication gradually declined and eventually the quarry above Thousand Steps closed.

For many years, the Steps laid dormant as a relic of the past until the mid-1990s when a renewed interest grew to preserve the Steps as part of the local history. During the same time, a small group of people dreamed of linking the Mid State Trail

in the north to the Tuscarora Trail in the south, which would naturally come down Jacks Mountain and absorb Thousand Steps. The Link Trail was eventually formed and today we refer to it as the Standing Stone Trail to reflect local influences. The Thousand Steps is the most popular section of the SST; however, many people do not realize that they are on a

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long-distance trail of over 80 miles and part of the Great Eastern Trail.

Thousand Steps is easily accessible and provides a tough but doable climb to the top where many beautiful views of the Juniata River Valley can be found. Of course, there are a few more than exactly 1,000 steps, but after reaching the top you can go east to see the closest view or continue to follow the orange blazes of the Standing Stone Trail and quickly reach the Dinkey House, which serviced locomotives during the operation of Ledge Quarry. One of my favorite views is the Mill Creek Quarry Vista, about three miles from the bottom of Thousand Steps.

My personal connection with Thousand Steps stems from many years ago when my parents took me there as a child. As an adult, it was one of the first places that I brought my wife when we were dating and she was new to the area. Now, later in life, I continue to bring my children, friends, and family on hikes there. Currently I enjoy running the trails in the area, and Thousand Steps is a great place to begin or finish a long run.